A Resume for the Ph.D. Degree Registration

On

George Orwell, Starhawk and Ruskin Bond : A Study in Ecocriticism

Submitted to

Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded

By

Vaibhav Atmaram Gangane

Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Dr Dhage R. N.

Professor of English
School of Languages and Literature
Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded.

June 2017

George Orwell, Starhawk and Ruskin Bond : A Study in Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is relatively a recent addition to the field of exploration which compels to look at literary studies through an ecocritical lens. The recent trend in the field of criticism is ecocriticism which emerged late in ninetieth and early twentieth century in USA and UK. The term 'ecocriticism' is derived from 'criticism' and shortened form of 'ecology'- the scientific analysis and study of interactions among organisms and their environment. Basically, ecocriticism is the study of representation of nature in literary works and of the relationship between literature and environment.

Human beings coexist with nature, in fact, they are the part of nature. They are constantly surrounded by it and interact with it. They are dependant, for their fundamental needs such as air to breath, water to drink and food to eat, on nature. This inter-dependant association between human beings and nature nurtures a fine balance in ecosystem. Ecocritic literature represents and interprets this connection between human and non-human from an interdisciplinary approach. Besides, Ecocriticism is a broad approach which can be classified in other sub-fields of eco-conscious studies, green studies, ecopoetics, ecology, ecofeminism, environmental literary criticism etc.

Though the nature is the central theme of all ecocritical works, all nature writings are not considered as ecocritical. But the human association, with the physical world and environment, forms the basis of ecocritical texts. Ecocritical works, at the same time, interpret and represent the natural world. It pleads for the better understanding of nature and seeks to protect the ecological rights of the nature.

Moreover, ecocriticism not only studies the literature in its ecological concerns but also it studies environment from interdisciplinary points of view. It talks about annihilation of the biological, physical environment, natural species and their extinction due to the urbanization and the industrialization. It raises environmental questions like the deforestation, pollution, natural degeneration and the environmental crisis to alert human mind. It also suggests possible solutions to major contemporary ecological issues.

Later on, ecocriticism emerged as a recognizable discipline within the literature in 1980s in the Western American Universities and in 1990s in the Britain. American and British romantic writers took interest in nature as a subject. Further, Victorian realists wrote about industrialization and globalization that was altering the natural landscape.

In USA ecocriticism was highly influenced by the writings of major nature poets and essayists like R. W. Emerson, H. D. Thoreau and Margaret Fuller. Emerson's *Nature* (1836) speaks about the impact of natural world upon him. He unfolds the spiritual unity of nature and urges his readers to enjoy a relationship with the environment. H. D. Thoreau's *Walden* (1854), a poetic narrative, describes his two year stay in a small wooden house. In this work, he encounters remarkable creatures and landscapes around him with microscopic details. Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lake* (1843) was a powerfully written journal of her encounter with the American landscapes. All these three books can be called the fundamental works of American ecocentered writings.

In Britain, ecocriticism is known as an environmental literary criticism or green studies, which emerged in 1990s. But, the history of British

ecocriticism goes back to 1730s. The English pre-romantic poet James Thomson published his best poem about nature, *Season*, a series of four poems during 1726-30. This poem is a description of country-side. Similarly, in *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751), Thomas Gray treats nature with utmost respect and reverence. But, the British ecocriticism was influenced by the writings of English romantic poets such as William Wordsworth, S. T. Coleridge, P. B. Shelly, John Keats and Lord Byron. All these romantic poets wrote poems with a focus on the beauty of nature. Substantially Speaking, they were splendidly inspired by nature.

The term 'ecocriticism' for the first time was employed by William Rueckert in his essay *Literature and Ecology : An Experiment in Ecocriticism* (1978). This essay sowed the seed of new discipline i.e. the application of ecology as well as ecological concepts to the study of literature. He defines ecocriticism with all possible relations between literature and physical world.

Cheryll Glotfelty, one of the pioneers in the field, coined the term ecocriticism in these words, "Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (https://en. wikipedia.org). In 1996, Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm co-edited the essay *The Ecocriticism Reader : Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. She is also the co-founder and ex-president of the Association for the study of Literature and Environment (ASLE).

However, in the book entitled *The Future of Environmental Criticism*, Lawrence Buell defines two waves of ecocriticism. According to him, the first wave of ecocritics focused on genres like nature writing, nature poetry

and wilderness fiction. They upheld the philosophy of organism. The second wave focused on social environmental issues such as degradation of landscapes, deforestation etc. Thus, ecocriticism is a multidimensional concern deeply embedded in the folds of ecological ethics.

Nature of Problem

1. How is nature portrayed in the select fiction? and what are the biocentric attempts to revise our relationship to the environment?

2. How and why has the concept of nature changed over a period of time?

3. How do the writers look at the issues of environmental disaster and crises in culture of a particular country?

4. How are living things and animals projected in the fiction and what is the relationship of these living things with the human beings?

5. How do the roles of men and women differ in terms of their attitude to environment?

6. It would be studied how the ecocritical issues structure a crucial place in their writings of the select fiction. Besides, it would be envisioned if the select British, American and Indian fiction investigate the entire fabric of ecological concerns and reflect the relationship between the nature and the human being. It would be seen if Orwell, Starhawk and Ruskin Bond advocate a synthesis of environmental, socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural concerns so as to strengthen an earth centered approach.

7. In the pretext of exploitation of nature, growing industrialization and consequent urbanization have nourished catastrophic hazards like global warming, reduction of biodiversity, war effects, infertility of land, draughts, degenerations of forest life etc. Therefore, an effort would be made to explore if the select fiction have been a derivation of regeneration for human beings and nature.

Hypothesis

1. It is assumed that George Orwell, Starhawk and Ruskin Bond are deeply rooted in the process of reflecting ecological observations and uncontrolled transformations.

2. It is also believed that unless and until we peep into the fabric of ecological concerns, we will not be able to perceive the expected and intended concerns to diagnose and reset natural system and hence these authors need to be interpreted in the context of ecocriticism.

Objectives

1. To Study ecocriticism as a crucial and a recent trend in the province of modern criticism.

2. To understand the concepts like apocalypse, anthropocene, anthropocentrism, biocentrism, ecocentrism and ecophobia.

3. To study the fiction from the perspective of ecology.

4. To establish Orwell, Starhawk and Bond as the most needed realists to generate consciousness about protecting ecological concerns to save earth.

5. To interpret the biophila (inter-relationship between the man and environment).

6. To study how do the writers create environmental awareness through their literary writings and how does "ecosophy" describe an ecologically informed approach to nature and literature as well as an approach which questions the hegemony of anthropocentric constructions of environment.

7. To comprehend the interdisciplinary nature of ecology which integrates philosophy, culture, ethics and feminism.

8. To articulate the role of the writers of fiction as environmental activist and spokesperson- the connection between nature, ethics and environmental responsibility.

9. To understand the environmental crisis and ethical as well as aesthetic dimension created by it.

10. To understand the dynamics of environmental awareness- social, cultural, political and educational processes.

11. To perceive the writers in the context of ecological catastrophe in which they lived and deliberated.

12. To inquire all pervasive material forces and their increasingly destructive effects on human life.

13. To compare to understand the conformities and dissimilarities in their projections leading to ecological awareness.

Research Methodology

Ecocriticism has not developed a methodology, its emphasis has been on its interdisciplinary nature. It is assumed that the humanities and sciences

should be in dialogue and its debate must be informed by critical as well as creative activity.

The absence of methodology is due to the lack of radical internal debate since the first **Association for the Study of Literature and Environment** (ASLE) conference at Fortcollins in 1995 and there are no basic theoretical tenets or ecocritical practices to rebel against. Truly, this inclusiveness and ability of ecocriticism has been its weakness.

Therefore, here, depending on the text and context, parameters would be developed and applied for perceiving and diagnosing the text from ecocritical perspective. This method would be applied to all the texts referred for exploration. Besides, this research project decisively aims at exploring and understanding the relationship between human and non-human agencies projected in the select fiction. Therefore, the methods of research have been critical, evaluative, analytical, interpretive, descriptive and comparative. These methods would be employed as per the issues taken for deliberation and reference. Besides, approaches would be necessarily socio economic, socio cultural, sociopolitical and linguistic.

Scope and Limitations of Research

This research would deal with the literary contribution of three authors including George Orwell, Starhawk and Ruskin Bond. The select fiction comprise *Burmese Days* and *Coming Up for Air* by George Orwell (British), *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, *Walking to Mercury* and *The Last Wild-Witch* by Starhawk (American). In the same vein, *The Blue Umbrella*, *The Book of Nature*, *The Room on the Roof*, *Vagrants in the Valley* and other

short story collections by Ruskin Bond (Indian) would be considered for detailed analysis leading to ecocritical speculations.

Consequently, as per requirement, an attempt would be made to study short fiction, non-fiction and other fictions of these authors to deliberate the standpoints for comparison as well as for cross analysis. In short, this research would be restricted to the select fictions and short stories, however, as per need a few texts would be added or skipped at the juncture or in an ambivalent situation.

Contribution to the Branch of Knowledge

The present exploration of fiction in the perspective of ecocriticism would be widely essential to comprehend the importance of nature writings hitherto paid a scant attention but very crucial in the wider significance of protecting the universe. There are diverse approaches to the study of literature, however, ecocriticism, a recently emerged approach to fiction would generate consciousness about the contemporary environment. This study would expose extinction of natural objects, degeneration of life, deforestation, all types of pollution and imbalance of nature including global warming. Thus, this anthropocentric study would be helpful to create awareness to reconstruct the relationship between nature and humanity at large.

Chapter I

Introduction

This introductory chapter would be divided into three distinguishable sections. The primary and first section would introduce the concept of ecocriticism in detail. Besides, a number of co-related concepts like anthropocene, apocalypse, anthropomorphim, ecophobia, anthropocentricism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism would also be studied.

The second section would be a sweeping historical survey of the developments and movements of ecocriticism. To streamline this issue the philosophers and scholar from Britain, America and India would be interpreted to perceive the manifestations of ecocriticism. In this context, the say of Greg Garrad, Graham Huggan, Helen Tiffin, Lawrence Buell, Rachel Carson, Dona Philips, Michel Branch, William Rueckert, Danial Patterson etc. would be taken into account.

The third section, preferably, would propose to take a review to record the sweeping survey of British, American and Indian fiction writers, especially, the predecessors of Orwell, Starhawk and Ruskin Bond in terms of ecological deliberations.

Chapter II

George Orwell

George Orwell, the most influential and outstanding writer from the western literature, advocates an ideology of ecological and the anthropocentric perspective through the fictions *Burmese Days* and *Coming Up for Air*. Basically, imperialistic power has destructive consequences for ethnic people and nature around the universe.

In a sense, *Burmese Days* contextualizes ecological catastrophe experienced by the policies of the British about ecological concerns over the ethnic people of Burma. Governing of unscathed jungle, unconsciousness of environmental impact and systematic clearance and its impact on the local ecosystem, manipulation of nature and economic priority would be analyzed systematically. The British disregarded ecological consequences of their deeds unless their economic interests were at a great difficulty. It would be studied if British self was completely anthropocentric and it is typically stained by excessive desire to seize and trade on the nature.

Similarly, in the novel *Coming Up for Air*, how does Orwell expose the annihilation of nature and culture as it is a serious problem of the modern industrialized world would be investigated.

The traditional England and capitalistic England, human settlement in the placement for animals and plants, recuperation of coasts for residential structuring, subversion of mangroves that are habitat for seabirds, amphibians and the aquatic animals are indentified as the basic cause for that ecological and environmental disorders. The widespread of industrialization and its process of modernization allure the world into ultimate destruction of environment. It is of great significance. In this context it would be analyzed here if the technology is, to some extent, responsible for the destruction of nature world. Besides, it would be explained if the devastation of the forest is an equally related ecological issue conversed in this line.

Chapter III

Starhawk

This chapter would reflect on the writings by Starhawk, an American fiction writer and ecological activist widely appreciated for her contribution to ecological concerns and writings, to generate deep awareness about her practical dedication to protect the mother earth. Her fictions like *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, *Walking to Mercury* and *The Last Wild Witch* would be referred to analyze how she sensitizes the entire humanity for introspection and retrospection in the respect of ecological degradation.

Besides, these fictions would be studied to perceive the necessity of preserving nature for human survival. It would also be captured how Starhawk imbibes the sense of nurturing the ecosystem for human existence.

Besides, here, since gender affects a variety of positions related to unjustified domination of women and undeserved oppression of nature, an effort would be made to study woman as a caretaker (for caring is an instinct of woman) of nature. It is hoped that only woman can protect the nature for both are the victims of patriarchy. In short, in addition to ecocriticism as and when it seems essential Starhawk's fiction would be analyzed in the context of ecofeminism.

Chapter IV

Ruskin Bond

This Chapter would analyze and interpret the abundance of natural beauty and depletion of the environment at the cost of urbanization and

modernization. In this context, his novels, *The Room on the Roof, Vagrants in the Valley* and *The Blue Umbrella* would be studied decisively. Besides, his short story collections like *The Book of Nature, My Favorite Nature, Rain in the Mountains* and *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* would be referred as per requirement. Besides, beauty of nature, this chapter will unfold the threats of environment caused by industrialization, urbanization as well as trade and commerce. Besides, the focus would be on the problems in terms of deforestation, pollution and decay of wildlife.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The chapter would be the summing up of the arguments and observations recorded in the earlier chapters. It would pinpoint and elaborate the findings leading to select texts in ecocritical context. It would also throw light on to what extent the ecological scenario has been projected to the best of perception of these authors.

In a sense, these authors would be compared and contrasted with to understand the conformities and dissimilarities in their projections leading to the entire ecological gamut. Besides, it would be the concern of this chapter to correlate and test the objectives to record findings and see if the answers of the posed questions are discovered. The findings in the context of tackling ecological crises and enriching man-nature relationship for sustainable survival would also be streamlined.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Orwell, George. *Burmese Days*. New Delhi: Penguin Books Ltd, 2010. Print.

Orwell, George. *Coming Up for Air*. New Delhi: Penguin Books Ltd, 2001. Print.

Starhawk. *The Fifth Sacred Thing*. New York: Bantam Books, 1994. Print.

Starhawk. *Walking to Mercury*. New York: Bantam Books, 1998. Print.

Starhawk. *The Last Wild Witch*. Oregon: Mother Tongue Ink, 2009. Print.

Bond, Ruskin. *The Room on the Roof*. New Delhi: Penguin Books Ltd, 2016. Print.

Bond, Ruskin. *Vagrants in the Valley*. Haryana: Penguin Random House India, 2016. Print.

Bond, Ruskin. *The Blue Umbrella*. New Delhi: Rupa Publicatioins India, 1992. Print.

Bond, Ruskin. *The Book of Nature*. New Delhi: Penguin Books Ltd, 2016. Print.

Bond, Ruskin. *My Favorite Nature*. New Delhi: Rupa Publicatioins India, 2016. Print.

Bond, Ruskin. *Rain in the Mountains*. New Delhi: Penguin Books Ltd, 2016. Print.

Bond, Ruskin. *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*. Haryana: Penguin Publication, 1991. Print.

Secondary Sources

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. New Delhi: Laxmi Publications, 2000. Print.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural*

Theory. New Delhi: Viva Books Private Limited, 2012. Print.

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism: The New Critical Idiom.* London and New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.

Anderson, Lorraine. *Sisters of the Earth: Women's Prose and Poetry About Nature*. ed. New York: Vintage, 1991. Print.

Bergon, Frank. *The Wilderness Reader*. New York: New American Library, 1980. Print.

Botkin, Daniel B. *Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. Print.

Brooks, Paul. *Speaking For Nature: How Literary Naturalists From Henry Thoreau to Rachel Carson Have Shaped America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980. Print.

Regan, Tom. *In Matters of Life and Death*, 2nd ed. New York: Random House, 1986. Print.

Glotfelty, Cheryll and Fromm, Harold. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. ed. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996. Print.

Sidney, Dobrin and Kenneth, Kidd. *Wild Things: Children's Culture and Ecocriticism*. ed. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004. Print.

Rueckert, William. "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. The University of Georgia Press: Athens, 1996. Print.

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring.* London: Penguine, 2000. Print.

WEBLIOGRAPHY

< https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecocriticism>. Web. 10 March 2017.

< http://libguides.uta.edu/ecocriticism/theories>. Web. 10 March 2017.

< http://www.ecobooks.com/books/ecocrit.htm>. Web. 10 March 2017.

< https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Buell>. Web. 10 March 2017.

< https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silent_Spring>. Web. 10 March 2017.

<https://www.enotes.com/topics/ecocriticism-and-nineteenth-century-literature>. Web. 10 March 2017.

<https://www.ral.ucar.edu/pressroom/features/air-pollution-a-global-problem>. Web. 10 March 2017.

< http://ijellh.com/environmental-issues-english-literature>. Web. 10 March 2017.

< https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fifth_Sacred_Thing>. Web. 10 March 2017.

< https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coming_Up_for_Air>. Web. 10 March 2017.

< https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Room_on_the_Roof>. Web. 10 March 2017.

Place : Nanded

Date : 17/05/2017

Research Supervisor **Researcher**

Dr Dhage R.N.
Professor in English
School of Languages and Literature,
Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada
University, Nanded.

Vaibhav Atmaram Gangane